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NOTE ON HORACE *ODES* i. 27. 21-24

Quae saga, quis te soluere Thessalis
 Magus uenenis, quis poterit deus?
 Vix inligatum te triformi
 Pegasus expedit Chimaera.

The key to the interpretation of these lines hangs on *inligatum*. The stock explanation of its function here is "tamquam draconis flexibus."¹ Commenting on "Thessalis . . . uenenis," Orelli utters the warning² that we are not to be influenced by *inligatum* into reading an allusion to *καράδεσμος*. But Kiessling (see n. 1) does read such an allusion in these words, and yet, strange to say, clings to the stereotyped explanation of *inligatum*. Our present contention is that throughout the quatrain Horace has clearly in mind the magic process rejected by the distinguished editors.

Although our knowledge of *defixio* and allied magic has greatly increased in recent years, yet we can find in that department only evidence of a collateral character to support our thesis. *Inligare* is not found in any extant *defixio*; *ligo*, however, and certain compounds other than *inligare* are found,³ and also *implicare*,⁴ a common synonym of *inligare*. Owing to the specialized manner in which these words are used in magical formulae, they are almost wholly denuded of their usual individual meanings, and all alike are invested with the single magical meaning "to bind" or "to detain with a spell against one's will." It would seem, then, quite accidental that *inligare* has not been preserved for us in a magic document. Even from this indirect evidence there emerges a reasonable probability that Horace, no mean authority on the ways and terms of the sorcerer,⁵ intended to clothe *inligatum* with a magical connotation and thus to conclude the stanza in a manner that accords with its beginning.

We have, moreover, a Tacitean example of *inligare* where it has fundamentally the same meaning that we claim for the word in the Horatian line, viz., "ut Abdum specie amicitiae uocatum ad epulas lento ueneno inligaret"

¹ Orelli (Baiter-Hirschfelder), *ad loc.*; Kiessling, *Oden und Epoden*, *ad loc.*; Wickham, *Odes, Epodes, and Carmen Saeculare*, *ad loc.*

² "De *καράδεσμος* propter seq. u. *inligatum* non cogitandum" (*loc. cit.*).

³ The figures refer to Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae*, Paris, 1904.

ligo—103, 3; 219a, 3; 247, 10; 252, 38; 253, 12-13, 19; 268, 6; 303, i, 6; ii, 11, 12. *adligo* and *alligo*—217a, 4; b, 2, 6; 218, 6-7; 250b, 10; 277, 11; 279, 20; 283a, 26; 284, 29; 303, II, 3, 11; III, 2; V, 5.

colligo—203, I, 6; II, 3, 11, 12; III, 2.

deligo—199, 6-7; 217a, 4; b, 6.

obligo—219a, 3, 12; 247, 9, 12, 15; 248a, 12; 250a, 2, 22; b, 12; 251, III, 2; 256, 36, 37, 41; 253, 18, 50, 58; 268, 1; 275, 29; 277, 11; 279, 20; 282a, 24; 283a, 26; 284, 29; 295, 11, 17; Wünsch, *Bonn. Jhbr.*, 1910, pp. 1 ff., No. 24.

perobligo—250a, 2, 22.

⁴ *impli[co]* (*Aud.* 248a, 13-14).

⁵ *Ep.* iii, v, xvii; *Sat.* i. 8.

(*Ann.* vi. 32. 7). Here there is stated the cold, matter-of-fact, physiological effect of poison. The transition from this to the erotic and poetical sphere of the stanza of Horace is easy if we remember that "*aetas et corpus tenerum et morigeratio, haec sunt uenena formosarum feminarum*" (*Afran. ap. Non.* ii. 7).¹ Horace therefore plainly but delicately tells his youthful and susceptible friend that he is "*inligatum*² Thessalis uenenis triformis Chimaerae," much in the same way in which Keats's knight-at-arms was made aware of the identity of his charming captor:

. . . La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall.

Moreover, so potent was the spell that only a professional trafficker in magic or some god could set him free. To enlarge further would be superfluous, as the charm of femininity has become a stock idea not only of all modern literatures but of daily speech. The word "charm" itself gives the idea a magical setting.

But let us consider for a moment the rejected interpretation—"tamquam draconis flexibus." At a glance it can be seen that this involves physical contact,³ a suggestion quite unnecessary here,⁴ and, in our judgment, destructive of the delicacy of the poem. To be sure, *inligatum* originally implies physical contiguity, but not so in the figurative sphere. Furthermore, it seems likely that Horace in his use of the word was influenced in large part by the Greek *ἐνδῶ*, which occurs frequently in connection with magical practices, and therefore figuratively: as *γάμων ἐνέδῃσεν ἄτq* (*Soph. Oed. Col.* 526); *ἄτq ἐνέδῃσσε βαρείῃ* (*Hom.* ii. 11. 111); Josephus *A.J.* IV. vi. 5; VIII. ii. 5 (where variant readings are significantly *ἐνῃδόμενα* and *ἐνδούμενοι*); *ἐπόμεθα ἀναγκαίῃ ἐνδεδεσμένοι* (*Her.* ix. 16); *ἐνδεδέσθαι ὀρκίους* (iii. 19); *μεγάλους ὀρκούς ἐνδησαμένα τὸν κατάρaton πόσιν* (*Eur. Med.* 161-63).

But still another point demands our attention. Most editors happen to leave with the reader the impression that they and Lucian Müller⁵ are single-minded in seeing in *deus* a reference to a major divinity only, as Apollo or Aesculapius, both of whom are credited with the use of drugs in healing. This arises, apparently, from regarding "Thessalis . . . uenenis" as an

¹ Cf. Verg. *Aen.* i. 688.

² *Inligatum* merely seems to be structurally absolute here; see next note.

³ As *adligare* in "*amplexa suo manus meas adligauit*" (*Sen. Contr.* i. 4. 9); [*uirginem*] *uictam deus fluuiialis alligat unda*" (*Val. Fl.* v. 28). But this verb often has the figurative meaning allied to that which in our passage we attach to *inligatum*, as *Ter. Ad.* 844 (cf. *Don. ad loc.*); *Apul. Met.* vi. 23; *Claud. xxxvi*, 258; *Buech., Carm. Ep.*, 944. See further n. 4, *s.v.*

⁴ This comes from needlessly linking together structurally *inligatum* and *triformi Chimaera*. In the other Horatian passages where *inligo* is used (*Ep.* i. 25; iii. 11) it is followed by forms that may be either ablative or dative; but the casual reader would probably feel them as datives.

⁵ *Oden und Epoden*, II, 104.

ablative of instrument rather than of separation. Now it is undoubtedly the latter if our interpretation of *inligatum* be correct. Granting, then, that it is a question of loosing from the spell of Thessalian potions, we are not restricted in *deus* to one of the drug-using healing divinities. On the contrary, we may draw virtually on the entire pantheon, for the magician, being no respecter of gods save so far as his own immediate ends are served, is likely to call summarily on any god, of high or low degree, to cast or to dissolve a spell.¹ In the light of this explanation the four lines appear in style and structure as more worthy of the artist Horace. If *deus* points to a major divinity only, then the strength of the climax "*saga . . . magus . . . deus*" is nullified by the sudden fall to the level of Pegasus, who is, according to Horace's own conception, not a thoroughbred *deus* but only a hybrid offshoot;² in short, the ladder would be broken at the topmost round. But with our interpretation the climax would produce the illusion of being heightened by the introduction of the name of Pegasus, for this would follow *deus* on the same level, as a "for instance" illustration.³ From the point of view of fact the climax remains as it is, but from the point of view of effect, which is the chief concern here, the climax is most imposingly extended.

May we not now offer the following rendering of the stanza in question: "What witch, what sorcerer, what divinity can free thee from Thessalian potions? Even Pegasus will be greatly tasked to free thee, bewitched (with potions) as thou art, from the three-bodied Chimaera"?

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ἌΝΤΙΣΤΡΟΦΗ ΣΥΝ ἈΝΤΙΘΕΣΕΙ

Prantl, in his *History of Logic* (I, 698), tells us that the technical expression *conversio per contrapositionem* occurs for the first time in Boethius. Martianus Capella describes it as *secunda conversio*, and Apuleius (*ibid.*, 585), though he has no technical term, explains that *omnis homo animal* is convertible as *omne non animal non homo*, which is also Boethius' example. Galen (*ibid.*, 569) uses the general term ἀντιστρέφον for the same form of conversion.

In all this Prantl and all the Greek lexicons known to me have overlooked the Greek technical term ἀντιστροφή σὺν ἀντιθέσει from which the

¹ Wunsch, *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae*, I, G, iii, 3, ind., p. 47; *Aud. op. cit.*, ind., pp. 460-70; Fox, "The Johns Hopkins Tabellae Defixionum," *Am. Jour. Philology*, XXX, 1, suppl., ind., p. 66.

² *deorum sanguinem* (*Odes* iv. 2. 13-14).

³ To object that Pegasus appears in no extant charm or counter-charm is idle, for Horace is here in a fun-making mood, a mood that brings to shape in poets' minds many stranger conceptions than this.